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Needs and expectations of smartphone apps features for enhancing physical activity in patients with COPD

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Abstract

Background: Smartphone apps may be valuable to promote physical activity (PA) behaviours in patients with COPD. However, studies assessing their effectiveness and actual usage have yielded mixed results. Assessing patients' perspectives may result in more engaging and effective mHealth solutions.

Aim: This study aimed to assess the needs and expectations of patients with COPD on the use of smartphone apps for PA promotion.

Methods: Two focus groups were conducted with 9 patients (64.3±7.6yrs, 8 male, FEV₁ 59.4±18.1%_{pred}). Data were analysed thematically.

Results: All patients reported having a smartphone and using it for calls and text messages only (n=3), plus for accessing social networks (n=6), monitoring PA (n=3) and watching videos (n=1). When asked about a smartphone app for PA promotion, all patients were interested in using the app if it proves to be able to encourage and guide them towards being more physically active. Needs and expectations regarding the app consisted of: 1) the use of a simple/clear language without foreign expressions, appropriate to their culture/education levels (n=8); 2) receiving detailed progress on PA with personalised goals adjusted to their health condition (n=8); 3) sharing experiences with other patients (n=4) and 4) monitoring physiological data (e.g., heart rate, oxygen

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